Amendments to the Specification

Please amend ¶ 0019 as follows:

[0019] The side vest sections 34 of the shell 48 have two shoulder straps 32 connected to two flexible vest side parts 34 which are connected to a front plate 36, best shown in FIG. 2. In a ballistic protection vest, the front plate 36 and the back plate 30 will have ballistic protection characteristics. If only the load carrying features of the system are required, the rigid front plate need not be included, but in any event the back plate 30 will be of rigid material. Thus, although the back plate 30 may be composed of a hardened lay-up of ballistic materials, it could also be formed of aluminum, carbon fiber, fiberglass, a thermoplastic material such as ABS plastic 1/8 inch thick or thicker, and it could be reinforced with glass fibers. Although there may be a small amount of flex in the plate, it should be generally rigid and not floppy like a fabric. The back plate 30 may also be a composite structure, for example plastic reinforced with metal spars, such as ABS plastic with 1/8 inch thick aluminum spars. As shown in FIG. 2, the back plate has a distinct curvature about several horizontal axes, as discussed in more detail below. It may also have a slight curvature about a vertical axis, to conform somewhat to the back of a user 21, although that is not necessary. Although shown as generally featureless, the back plate could also be formed with stiffening ribs or corrugations, to permit increased stiffness at reduced weight.

Please amend ¶ 0021 as follow:

[0021] As best shown in FIG. 1, the back plate has an upper segment 42 which extends downwardly and frontwardly, as worn, and is supported by the back pads 38 against the user's back. The upper segment 42 may be somewhat concave as it faces frontwardly, such that it has a top portion 44 which projects frontwardly to extend along the upper portion of the wearer's back. The back plate 30 has a lower segment 46 which extends downwardly and rearwardly from the upper segment. The angle α between the upper segment 42 and the lower segment 46 of the back plate is less than 180 degrees, and more than 90 degrees, preferably about 120 degrees.